



# NEWS

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **IMPACT: AVOID IT. WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT**

(Sacramento) Motor vehicle collisions are the leading killer of teenagers, and the California Highway (CHP) is determined to make an “impact” on young drivers by issuing a statewide challenge to save their lives.

Funded by a grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, through the state Office of Traffic Safety, the California High School Seat Belt Challenge, or “impact”, is a four-week program to educate teens on the risks and consequences of not wearing a seat belt.

“Impact” encourages local high schools to challenge other high schools in their city or county to see which school can most improve seat belt use among students. Seat belt surveys will be conducted by the CHP to determine who has the highest overall compliance, and which school showed the most improvement. Certificates will be awarded to successful schools.

In California last year, 236 teenagers between the age of 14 and 18 were killed in collisions. Of those teen fatalities, 42 percent were not wearing their seat belt.

“Seat belts are designed to secure your body in place during a collision and in a rollover crash to prevent injury or death,” said CHP Commissioner Mike Brown.

In a collision, you have three or four sub-collisions all taking place in sequence. First, the vehicle hits an object. The vehicle abruptly slows, but unrestrained objects inside it continue at the same speed, in the same direction. Then the unrestrained body hits the inside of the vehicle, and starts to slow. That’s the second collision. The third impact is when the body’s internal organs are still moving at speed until they hit the inside of the chest. Finally, the fourth collision is when your passenger who was riding in the back slams into you, because they were not wearing their seatbelt either and kept moving at the same speed in the same direction.

“Challenge yourself and your friends to wear their seat belt,” said CHP Commissioner Mike Brown. “Whether you are driving or riding in a vehicle, it’s the simplest thing you can do to help save your life.”

“Impact” gets underway October 1, 2007. High schools wishing to participate in the program may apply through their local CHP office for a mini-grant of up to \$9,999.99 to fund their program.

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